

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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41

ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7111

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 12552

STADIS//////////

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (MIDDENDORF, WILLIAM J.)

SUBJECT: PROPOSED TRAVEL OF SECRETARY OF NAVY

REF: STATE 228297

1. WE DO NOT THINK PROPOSED VISIT IS A GOOD IDEA, GIVEN PAUCITY OF NAVAL PROGRAMS OF MUTUAL INTEREST TO EGYPT AND US. WE HAVE BEGUN A LOW-KEY PROGRAM OF SIXTH FLEET VISITS TO ALEXANDRIA ABOUT EVERY THREE MONTHS, BUT EGYPTIAN AUTHORITIES DO NOT WANT TO ACCENTUATE THIS BUDDING RELATIONSHIP AT THIS TIME. EGYPTIANS WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH TO PURCHASE MILITARY, INCLUDING NAVAL, EQUIPMENT FROM US, BUT OUR POLICY CONSTRAINTS HAVE PREVENTED THIS. VISIT BY SECRETARY OF NAVY WOULD GIVE RISE TO FALSE HOPES THAT AMILITARY RELATIONSHIP INCLUDING SALES OF EQUIPMENT WOULD DEVELOP. ANY SUCH VISIT WOULD HAVE TO BE CLEARED BY PRESIDENT SADAT PERSONALLY AND HE WOULD WANT TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT ATTITUDE OF HIS ARAB CRITICS, WHO MIGHT SEIZE ON VISIT AS EVIDENCE OF US-EGYPTIAN COLLUSION ON SINAI II AGREEMENT, LEBANESE CRISIS, ETC. IN SUM, EMBASSY WOULD OPPOSE VISIT BY SUCH HIGH-RANKING MILITARY FIGURE UNTIL WE ARE PREPARED TO GIVE GREATER SUBSTANCE TO A MILITARY RELATIONSHIP WITH EGYPT. WE LEAVE TO DEPT TO CONSIDER HOW SUCH A VISIT WOULD BE VIEWED IN ISRAEL.

2. DEPT MAY WISH TO SEEK AMB EILTS' VIEWS ON THIS MATTER.

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MATTHEWS

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